

DJIBOUTI



Djibouti U.S. assistance will help the Government of the Republic of Djibouti (GORD) ensure that this strategic gateway to internal African markets and to the Gulf of Aden remains safe, secure and stable, both for the benefit of the people of Djibouti, and for the entire Horn of Africa and the rest of the world. Without major natural resources or arable land, Djibouti depends on services provided by its port, airport, and financial institutions for more than 80 percent of its gross domestic product. Djibouti is the sole port for delivery of goods, including food aid, to land-locked Ethiopia. Djibouti's continued stability and development are therefore critical not only for its own people, but also for more than 82 million Ethiopians. The United States partners with Djibouti to help mitigate internal and external security threats. With an unemployment rate of over 60 percent and high illiteracy rates, providing educational and economic opportunities are critical for stability. The U.S. will continue to support basic education, particularly for girls, with an emphasis on combating high illiteracy rates. Assistance will be linked with programs focusing on basic skills training and job creation. At the same time, the U.S. will provide assistance for elections and political processes, including support for a free and fair electoral environment in the run-up to Djibouti's third presidential election in 2011. This, along with improved quality of healthcare and provision of food aid for the vulnerable and malnourished, will help to build a strong and stable Djibouti. Externally, U.S. security cooperation, including through the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), will continue to help Djibouti protect its land and maritime borders against threats of extremism and terrorism.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: Military and economic agreements with France provide continued security and economic assistance. Djibouti serves as the headquarters for the European Union's "Atalanta" naval task force and for a Japanese contingent, combating piracy off the coast of Somalia. Djibouti is a member of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), as well as the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the International Organization of Francophones ("Organisation internationale de la Francophonie," or OIF). Djibouti is also a member of the East African Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism (EASBRICOM), which is currently commanded by a Djiboutian general.

Djibouti is greatly affected by events in Somalia and Ethiopia, so relations are important and, at times, delicate. The 1991 falls of the Siad Barre and Mengistu governments in Somalia and Ethiopia, respectively, caused Djibouti to face national security threats due to instability in the neighboring states and a massive influx of refugees estimated at 100,000 from Somalia and Ethiopia. In 2000, after 3 years of insufficient rain, 50,000 drought victims entered Djibouti. The number of refugees in Djibouti has doubled since 2006, with approximately 12,000 now registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), predominantly from Somalia and Ethiopia.

In 1996, a revitalized organization of seven East African states, IGAD, established its secretariat in Djibouti. IGAD's mandate is for regional cooperation and economic integration, and it has also sought to play a positive role promoting regional stability, including its efforts in support of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Djibouti seeks to play a stabilizing role in the frequently tense regional politics of the Horn of Africa. Djibouti hosted UN-sponsored Somali reconciliation talks in 2008-2009 (the "Djibouti Process"), and

provided military training for TFG troops in late 2009. Djibouti became Ethiopia's sole link to the sea when fighting broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998. Djibouti's relations with Eritrea have become strained after a military confrontation in June 2008 along their shared border. The situation remains at an impasse, despite international condemnation of Eritrea's continued occupation of Djiboutian territory at Ras Doumeira.

Djibouti continues to cultivate cordial relations with Ethiopia, reflecting the fundamental economic ties between the two countries and a long tradition of interchanges. However, rising tensions in Somalia and Ethiopian military involvement in Somalia in 2007 fueled widespread criticism of Ethiopia among Djibouti's majority Somali-speaking population. President Guelleh attended the 2007 Africa Union summit in Ethiopia and supports the African Union peacekeeping operation for Somalia (AMISOM).

U.S.-DJIBOUTIAN RELATIONS: In April 1977, the United States established a Consulate General in Djibouti and upon independence in June 1977 raised the status of its mission to an embassy. The first U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti arrived in October 1980. Over the past decade, the United States has been a principal provider of humanitarian assistance for famine relief, and has sponsored health care, education, good governance, and security assistance programs.

Djibouti is a U.S. partner on security, regional stability, and humanitarian efforts in the Horn of Africa. The Djiboutian Government has been very supportive of U.S. and Western interests, particularly since the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 and after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. President Guelleh continues to take a very proactive position against terrorism. In 2002, Djibouti agreed to host a U.S. military presence at Camp Lemonier, a former French Foreign Legion base outside the capital that now houses approximately 2,200 American personnel. U.S. service members have been instrumental in providing humanitarian, development, and security assistance to the people and governments of the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Djibouti has also allowed the U.S. military, as well as other nations, access to its port and airport facilities.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Food for Peace program maintains a warehouse for pre-positioned emergency food relief in Djibouti--the only one of its kind outside the continental United States--allowing expedient delivery of humanitarian assistance to famine-stricken countries from Africa to Asia. International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) facilities in Djibouti transmit Arabic-language Radio Sawa programming and Voice of America (VOA) Somali Service broadcasts to neighboring Somalia and the Arabian Peninsula.

Peace and Security: Djibouti's location between Africa and the Middle East, its proximity to unstable states in the Horn of Africa, and the presence of Camp Lemonier, the only U.S. military base on the continent of Africa, greatly increases the small nation's strategic value. Djibouti is threatened by ongoing conflict in Somalia, border incursions by Eritrea, and the growing problem of piracy south of its territorial waters. U.S. security cooperation seeks to ensure that Djibouti can protect its land and maritime borders and resist the spread of extremism and terrorism. Department of State-funded programs will promote security sector reform, enhance military expertise and professionalism, and support counterterrorism efforts. The programs will focus on establishing facilities, improving and modernizing key equipment, and assisting in the operation and maintenance of U.S.-supplied systems. **Governing Justly and Democratically:** In 2011, Djiboutians will elect a new President in only the third presidential election since independence. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) technical assistance and training in FY 2010 will continue to support the strengthening of important election systems in this emerging democracy, with the goal of free and fair elections in 2011. This assistance will also include the establishment and operation of an independent National Electoral Commission, support to political parties, and support for public awareness and civic education campaigns that educate citizens on democratic norms and standards.

Investing in People: To ensure continued internal stability in Djibouti, USAID will support health and education programs that promote social equity and increase the participation of the average Djiboutian in the workplace. USAID-funded health activities will continue assistance to the Ministry of Health (MOH) to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality, combat maternal and young child malnutrition, and reduce tuberculosis and polio. Support for essential health services will strengthen decentralized health services and refine the health information systems needed by the MOH to improve the quality of health services. Djibouti will also receive funding to implement the national HIV/AIDS strategy and the goals of the President's Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

In FY 2009 USAID will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of U.S. investments and achievements to date in the education sector. Outcomes from the evaluation will inform education program decisions for FY 2010 and beyond. In FY 2010 the education program will continue its essential focus on basic education, promoting expanded access, particularly for girls and disadvantaged children, and skills development to enhance the potential for employability for both in-school and out-of-school youth. It will build on the successes of USAID-funded activities that created Parent Teacher Associations, addressed the gender disparity in enrollment and attendance, and promoted quality education at all levels. Successes in these areas will be achieved by improving decentralized teacher training and strengthening the Ministry of Education's planning division, including an education information and management system. A particular focus on linking education and skills training to market-oriented growth sectors will establish a clear and strategic link between planned activities for Education and Economic Growth.

Focus on Performance: With an unemployment rate of 60 percent and high illiteracy rates, access to educational and economic opportunities is key for stability in Djibouti and the Horn of Africa. In FY 2010, the U.S. will begin to work with the government and private sector leaders to develop vocational education and training, promote workforce development, and increase the skills and work ethic that Djiboutians need to start up micro-enterprises and to compete in their own changing labor market. Special focus will be placed on increasing economic opportunities for out-of-school youth in a service economy. U.S. assistance will assess private sector demands and skill gaps to promote linkages between the private sector and training providers to support targeted industry-based training. Activities will also encompass the development of strategies to encourage foreign companies to hire and train Djiboutian staff. As this is a start-up activity for 2010, it is anticipated that results will begin to be achieved in 2011. It is anticipated that 100 graduates of U.S.-supported vocational training will be placed in jobs every year beginning in 2011.

Economic Growth: New USAID activities in FY 2010 will focus on economic opportunities, especially for out-of-school youth. Reducing unemployment and boosting investment and productivity will complement USAID investments in health and education and respond to demands for job opportunities by a population with increasingly marketable skills. USAID assistance will assess private sector demands and skill gaps, and promote linkages between the private sector and training providers that support targeted industry-based training. Activities will encompass the development of strategies to encourage foreign companies to hire and train Djiboutian staff.

Humanitarian Assistance: Economic development in Djibouti is hampered by chronic food insecurity caused by a harsh climate and flash flooding. In FY2010, USAID will support the development of early warning information systems to inform Djiboutian decision makers of pending problems and facilitate emergency procedures.